PAM.
JAPAN

THE WORK IN JAPAN.

SOME FACTS AND PHASES NOT GENERALLY UNDERSTOOD.

By Dr. J. D. DAVIS, Kyoto.

1. **Japan is not yet evangelized.**—The leaders of the nation have come powerfully, although unconsciously, under the influence of Christianity, but the masses of the people are as yet only touched in spots. There is, on an average, only about one adult Protestant Christian to each thousand of the population. These more than fifty thousand Christians are not evenly distributed over the country. The great majority of them are found in ten or twelve of the forty-six prefectures of the empire.

It is safe to say that thirty millions of the people in Japan have never heard of Christianity only in the most general way. There are large districts which are as untouched as they were thirty years ago. Many of the prefectures which have been entered have only been touched on the edges, as it were.

The rich agricultural prefecture of Niigata, with an area equal to that of the state of Connecticut, and a population of nearly two millions, has only two missionary families in it, one of them still grappling with the language, and it has only ten or twelve Japanese workers, all told. There are many cities and towns in this province which have never been entered by a Christian worker. The Shiga prefecture, in the fertile Lake Biwa basin, east of Kyoto, with a population of nearly one million, scattered in more than twelve hundred towns and villages, has not a single foreign missionary in it and only seven or eight Japanese workers. Other prefectures are less touched than the two just mentioned. There are many places in Japan which would gladly welcome foreign or Japanese workers if they could be sent.

2. **There is everywhere a readiness to hear and receive the message.**—The nation was sobered by the great war with Russia. The work of the Y. M. C. A. in Manchuria made an impression favorable to Christianity upon half a million soldiers who have

returned to their homes. The Emperor's gifts to this work and to other Christian institutions, have made a powerful impression upon the people. The great Student Conference in Tokyo, where delegates from twenty-five different countries met, and the evangelistic campaign which followed, have powerfully commended Christianity to the intelligent thinking class in Japan. The work of the self-supporting churches, the influence of the Y. M. C. A.'s, and of their workers and teachers in the government schools, and the enthusiastic reception everywhere given to Gen. Booth, in addition to the waves of influence above mentioned, have made the people more ready to listen to Christianity than ever before. Young men from interior towns and villages have become Christians in many of the schools, and the way is open for work to be begun in their country homes. The leaders of the nation and thoughtful men everywhere are feeling the need of a new moral basis, and many of them are looking to Christianity to furnish that basis. The nation is ready to be evangelized as never before.

At the same time Japan has become the leader of the Orient. "*But whither?*" Korea, Manchuria, and China are being powerfully influenced by Japan, both directly and indirectly. The whole situation calls for a vigorous forward movement.

3. **The evangelistic power of the Japanese church is greatly limited.** There are four hundred and fifty organized churches in Japan. One hundred and fifteen of these are self-supporting. The rest are struggling toward self-support. Nearly one half of the self-supporting churches are in the *Kumi-ai* body. The other churches can make no great forward movement for evangelization in new places, in the near future. Neither can the *Kumi-ai* churches. They have recently taken over from the mission forty dependent churches, and are struggling to bring them up to self-support. The mission pay over to the *Kumi-ai* body this year the last of the three years' grants in aid; namely, about fifteen hundred dollars, this being more than one quarter of what we have for station evangelistic work. The rapid rise of rents, food, and all living expenses greatly complicates the situation.

4. **There is cordial co-operation between the missionaries of the American Board and the *Kumi-ai* churches.** From the first,

the relation of the missionaries of the American Board to the churches has been one of friendly counsel, and not one of authority. This relation was never more cordial than it is to-day. Nearly all the members of the mission who are free to engage in evangelistic work hold themselves ready to respond to invitations from their Japanese brethren to assist in the work. Eight of them are formally appointed as associate members of the *Kumi-ai* Missionary Society. The writer was invited by this Society last fall to visit Korea and assist in work among the Japanese there. On his return from Korea, he responded to an invitation from a district Association to make an evangelistic tour in the Niigata province. Since his return from furlough, two years ago, as he could not speak in more than one place at the same time, and as he has tried to limit himself to one address a day, he has not been able to respond to more than half of the invitations which have come to him from his Japanese brethren to assist in evangelistic work. He has the conviction that such co-operative work is far more effective than independent work could be, on the part of the missionary in Japan.

5. **The Mission cannot move forward.**—There is great need of an advance. There is, as we have seen above, a great call for it. Places are offering half the support of an evangelist if one can be sent. There are about thirty preaching places entirely under the care of our twelve stations. Shall we open no new work among the thirty millions who have not heard anything of Christianity? Shall we rest from our aggressive evangelistic labors and cease to raise up new churches which will rapidly become self-supporting and pass over to the independent *Kumi-ai* body? We have hoped to be able to do this, but there comes with the opening year a necessary *cut* of nearly twenty per cent on the money we had expected to receive for our station evangelistic work. This comes at a time when the rapid rise in prices increases the cost of our travel and touring, and makes imperative an increase of the salaries of all Japanese evangelists and workers. No new work can be attempted. Some of our work in hand must be stopped. The missionaries must curtail their touring and fail to respond to the invitations of their Japanese brethren. A few thousand dollars additional would double the evangelistic efficiency of this mission this year.

6. **This condition is world-wide.**—The whole wide work of the American Board is halting and suffering in the same way. A comparatively slight additional appropriation would greatly increase the evangelistic efficiency of the workers connected with every mission of the Board. Hence the Japan Mission can neither criticise the American Board for reduced appropriations here, nor ask the Board to appropriate more money to Japan.

The writer, however, feels impelled to appeal to the churches which are behind the Board by making the facts known. Can you afford to put an army of soldiers into the field to conquer the world, and clothe, and feed, and house them at a yearly cost of eight or nine hundred thousand dollars, and keep them shut up year after year in the few places they have occupied, when an additional expenditure of ten per cent would secure an aggressive campaign and double the efficiency of your army? That is the way it looks to an old soldier in the field. He has no heart to ask anything more for Japan, great as is the need and the opportunity here, in view of the great need of China and other fields, and when the Zulu mission, for example, is almost literally dying for want of help. *But oh, the pity of it! Oh, the shame of it, when the wealth of the church is doubling every ten years!*

The writer is an optimist. His optimism increases the older he becomes. He believes that the Church of Christ is going to move forward. Shall things material, political, social, move forward with ever accelerating, almost revolutionary speed, and the Church of Christ stand still spiritually? Shall there be no higher prevailing type of Christianity in the 20th. century than there was in the 19th? Shall not the Church of the living God, founded, fed, and guided by the indwelling Spirit of promise, shall not this Church march with ever-accelerating step? We believe it will. We will labor, and hope, and pray in the faith that the Church is soon to awake and say to her army in the field: "Go Forward." When the Church generally can rise to the height of consecration of the Korean Church, so that all the individual members will feel that their great purpose in life is to *live* the Gospel and *preach* the Gospel, always and everywhere, the world will be converted.